

We have a chance to pass significant improvements in health care for children. We have a chance to do a number of things in foreign affairs to make the world safer. We have a chance to deal with the entitlements problem for the next generation. All of this can be done this year.

It can only be done if I can maintain an atmosphere of both openness to members of the Republican Party who want to work with us and if the Democrats know that we are proceeding with conviction to prepare this country for the next century consistent with what we pledged to do in the election.

And what I want to ask you to do is to continue to give me your support in a constructive way. When we deal with these issues, if you have some suggestion, let me know. If you can mobilize support, do it. But just remember, every day is a day we're moving closer to a new century and a new millennium, and if we do our job, we will open the greatest period in American history. If we fail to do our job, our children and grandchildren should never forgive us. And if something happens that we don't do it in Washington, we ought to make sure it is not the responsibility of our Democrats in the Senate or the House or the White House.

Every day we get up and go to work there to try to make this country a better place. Ultimately, when you get right down to the bottom line, that is what you have supported and what I promise you you will continue to support. And I want you always to be proud of it and always to believe in it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. at the residence of Shelby and Katherine Bryan.

### **Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Juvenile Crime in Boston, Massachusetts**

*February 19, 1997*

**The President.** Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor, and let me thank all the panelists who are here and all of those who are in the audience, people who represent law enforcement groups around America, people who represent the families who have suffered loss.

We are here today for a simple reason: Boston proves that we can take the streets back of our country from juvenile violence and crime, from murder, from lost lives, that we can give our children back their childhood and we can give our streets and our neighborhoods back to the families who live on them.

And what we are trying to do in Washington, what I am determined to do in this legislative session, is to take the lessons learned and the triumphs achieved here in Boston and the progress made and embody it in a legislative proposal that the Attorney General has worked very hard with me on to try to give other communities the chance to do what you have done here. It's not a very complicated strategy, but it's the most sensible one we can follow.

Between 1990 and 1995, juvenile homicides dropped by 80 percent in the city of Boston. Since July of 1995, not a single child under 16 has been killed by a gun in this city. Our anti-gang and youth violence strategy essentially rests on four elements, all of which can be found in what has been done here: first, targeting violent gangs and juveniles with more prosecutors and tougher laws; second, working to make our children gun-free and drug-free; third, streamlining and reforming our juvenile justice system; and fourth, giving our young people something to say yes to, not just looking for ways to punish those who have done wrong but to give kids a chance to make some positive steps and actually have a little constructive fun in their lives. I've seen that here in Boston, too.

I have a lot to be grateful to the mayor for, but one of the things that I'm especially grateful for is that he gave me a chance early on in his term to sit and meet with his youth council, the young people that have advised him and worked with him, along with Sister Jean, who has been to Washington to help us out a couple of times.

And I have seen the remarkable balance of your program; I'm excited about it. I also know that for this to succeed nationwide everyone has a part to play. We can pass laws in Washington, we can be supportive at the Federal level, but we have to have the support of grassroots citizens, of business lead-

ers, religious leaders, as well as those in law enforcement and parents and obviously the political leaders here.

So, Mr. Mayor, I'm glad to be here. Governor, Senator, Congressmen, thank you all for having us here, and I think I'd like to let you go on with the program now and listen.

*[At this point, Mayor Thomas Menino of Boston introduced Paul Evans, Boston police commissioner, who discussed Boston's law enforcement strategy based on a neighborhood policing program. William Stewart, Suffolk County Superior Court probation officer, then discussed the Operation Night Light partnership between police officers and probation officers, including night home visits with juvenile offenders and their parents. Terry Thompson, member of the mayor's youth council, said Operation Night Light had gotten him off the street and turned his probation officer into a friend.]*

**The President.** How old are you now?

**Mr. Thompson.** Nineteen.

**The President.** You're 19, and you're working two jobs?

*[Mr. Thompson affirmed that, saying that he was the first of his probation officer's clients to get a GED and that he still visited his probation officer and others in the department because he liked them.]*

**The President.** Good for you.

*[Rev. Jeffrey Brown of the Ten-Point Coalition described the activities of the ecumenical group of clergy and laity to combat inner-city violence and despair and provide hope and spiritual discipline to youth.]*

**The President.** I was just thinking, if I might, that you had a remarkable phrase in your remarks that maybe those of us who live and work in Washington, along with the kids that you work with on the streets, need to develop. You said you're trying to help people develop a spiritual discipline against the resentments they feel. I think that's pretty good. We all need that. *[Laughter]* Good for you.

*[Ralph Martin, Suffolk County district attorney, discussed the changing role of prosecutors as community leaders who could bring*

*together a variety of community resources to restore order in neighborhoods. Capt. Robert P. Dunford of Boston's Area C-11 Police District discussed accountability and communication at the grassroots level, the safe neighborhood initiative, and home visits to habitual truants. Lanita Tolentino, member of the mayor's youth council, described its activities as a liaison between the mayor and the youth of Boston.]*

**The President.** How often do you meet with the mayor—does the council meet with the mayor?

**Ms. Tolentino.** I would say, every 2 months, about that. But I see him more than that.

*[Mayor Menino noted that he saw everyone more often than that. Tanya Brooks, Suffolk County Superior Court probation officer, then described her rules for probationers, saying she was considered unreasonable by some but appreciated by others. Attorney General Janet Reno praised Boston's cooperative efforts to make a difference in the lives of its young people. Mayor Menino then reiterated the importance of partnership, and Sister Jean Girbaudo, the mayor's youth adviser, praised his commitment, saying that the young people of Boston had a direct influence on public policy. U.S. Attorney Donald Stern described targeted efforts against gun traffickers, repeat violent offenders, and violent criminal organizations as an extension of community policing and expressed support for legislation to provide additional tools at the Federal level.]*

**The President.** If I could just say very briefly, in support of not only what the Justice Department has done but also we have Ray Kelly here, who's our Under Secretary of the Treasury for Enforcement: We do recognize that one of our important roles nationally—and I want to thank all the Members of the Senate and the House that are here for their support—is to do what we can to at least disarm people who should not have guns.

And I think the Brady bill has helped, the assault weapons bill has helped, the work the Treasury has done to try to be more disciplined in who can be federally licensed to sell guns has helped. There are fewer than

half the number of people licensed to sell guns today than there were 4 years ago, fewer than half. And I thank you for that, for your efforts there.

And in this bill we have two other things: We extend the provisions of the Brady bill to violent juvenile offenders, and we require some sort of trigger or gun lock mechanism to be on guns that are in the reach of children. I think that's very important. I thank you for what you're doing.

*[Mayor Menino introduced Senator John F. Kerry, who said that anticrime legislation was a godsend in providing Federal funding to community programs. Gov. William Weld of Massachusetts stressed the importance of education and job programs to prevent crime and praised the administration's support for prevention efforts. Massachusetts Attorney General L. Scott Harshbarger reiterated that the best anticrime program was prevention and thanked the President for spotlighting that. Representative Joseph P. Kennedy II noted the role of neighborhood residents in reclaiming their neighborhood from crime and the demonstrated success of prevention programs. Representative John Joseph Moakley thanked the President for supporting anticrime legislation. Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr., noted the success of community policing and said that Boston provided an example to the rest of the Nation that prevention programs worked as well. Mayor Menino concluded that the keys to success were collaboration and communication, along with the tools provided by anticrime legislation.]*

**The President.** Thank you very much, Mayor. I don't think we can possibly minimize the role that you have played in all this, the impetus you gave to everybody else. You are someone who is as gifted as anyone I've ever known at bringing people together and making people feel comfortable, when they're from different walks of life, in the same room together working on the same thing. I think the enormous trust the people of this city have in you is one of the reasons this has happened. And I thank you for that.

Let me also say just briefly, in closing, two points. Number one, when I asked Janet Reno to become Attorney General, I knew that I was—that we were together taking a

chance, because I had been a State attorney general and a Governor, dealing with crime problems—Governor of a small State dealing with crime problems on a community basis. And she had been a prosecuting attorney in a very large and a very complicated county, with enormous and very challenging problems. But neither one of us had ever dealt with the Federal system except on the other end of it.

I did it because we believed together that the only way we would ever get the crime rate going back down and start saving children's lives and giving people the confidence they need to deal with all the other challenges—the economic, the educational, the other challenges we face—is if the lessons that were being manifested at the community level in America could somehow sweep the country and be reflected in national policy.

When I became President and I discovered that Senator Biden, then the Chairman of the Senate committee that had control of this legislation, believed the same thing, we fated a lot of heat and became vulnerable to a lot of very—what was in the short run quite effective political rhetoric, you know, we were trying to take everybody's guns away and throwing money at these problems and all that. But you see, now, 4 years later, we know the truth, that what we have tried to do is simply give more people like Mayor Menino and Probation Officer Brooks and Commissioner Evans and Captain Dunford and all the others a chance to succeed all over America. That's what we've tried to do.

It is a very simple strategy, but it will work. It will work. And today the juvenile program I'm going to announce is basically an attempt to take what you have proved works here and give those tools to every community in the Nation to follow. Let me just say, no disrespect to anybody else, but you know the people I listened most closely to today were Terry and Lanita because they're going to be around here long after I'm gone.

And what we have to do, the rest of us, is to construct a system that works for them and that works for parents like the Chery's, who lost a child because of the failures of America and who have spent their lives now trying to make sure it doesn't happen to anybody else. So this is a huge deal.

There was a report—I will just close with this—there was a report that was issued a few weeks ago by the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, saying that 75 percent of all the teenagers who lose their lives, who are murdered, in the entire industrial world are murdered in America—75 percent. Now, that hasn't happened in Boston in over a year and a half. If it doesn't happen in Boston, it doesn't have to happen anyplace else. We can turn this around.

America now knows we can bring the crime rate down. Now America has to learn that we can save our children and that we do not have to put up with this and that the only way to solve it is the way you have solved it, but that we have a job in Washington to create the conditions and give you the tools which will make it possible for you to solve it. That's what we're trying to do. But let's not forget what the stakes are.

You know, I've spent a lot of time—we had a big telecommunications trade agreement that we finished last weekend which will create a million new jobs in America over the next 12 years. I want every child in Boston to be alive to have a chance to get one of those jobs.

Let's do first things first. Let's get this done, and let's remember that what we're really trying to do is make what you've done here possible for children in communities all across America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:19 a.m. in the McCormack Building.

### **Remarks at the University of Massachusetts in Boston** *February 19, 1997*

Thank you. Mr. Mayor, Commissioner Evans, Probation Officer Tanya Brooks, President Bulger, Chancellor Sherry Penney, Governor Weld, Senator Kerry, Congressman Moakley, Congressman Kennedy—I understand you're also an alumni of this university—Attorney General Harshbarger, the president of the National Association of Attorneys General, thank you all for welcoming me here.

And I'm delighted to be here with two of my great partners in this endeavor, our wonderful Attorney General Janet Reno and the Under Secretary of the Treasury for Enforcement Ray Kelly. Thank you for being here. We're all glad to be here.

I want to thank all the police officers for being here, especially the Voices in Blue for singing the national anthem. They were great. Great job, gentlemen. And I'd like to thank the students at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. I know that 80 percent of the students—I've been told at least that 80 percent of the students here are working virtually full-time while pursuing their degrees. That's a great tribute to you. And if our budget passes, we'll have the direct loan program, the AmeriCorps program, tax cuts for tuition, and a huge increase in Pell grants and work-study. I hope it will help you all.

Oh, there's one more thing before I begin my prepared remarks. This is my first trip to Boston and to Massachusetts in 1997, and if you will forgive me a purely personal remark, I want to thank the people of Massachusetts for giving me the biggest margin of victory of any State in the country. Thank you very much. *[Applause]* Thank you.

Let me begin, if I might, by trying to put today's event into some context. You heard the mayor talking about declining crime generally in Boston. Let me just ask you to go back to 4 or 5 years ago. When I assumed this office, I wanted to do basically two big things. One is, I wanted to kind of get America fixed up; I wanted things to work again. And then I wanted to get all of us together to focus on what we need to do to prepare our people for a new century; to preserve the American dream for everyone who is willing to work for it without regard to their background or where they start out in life; to preserve a sense of community that embraces every American who is willing to be a responsible citizen; and to create a sense that our families, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, our schools, all of our organization were working again; and to maintain our leadership in a rapidly changing world. But first we had to make sure things would work.

And the first thing we worked through in Washington was an economic program that was designed to change the whole economic